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L Press Guidance
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DRAFT EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT REPORT ON RENDITIONS

Question:

Yesterday, a Temporary Committee to the European Parliament regarding rendition flights issued a draft report. Is there anything new in this report?

Answer:

- While we continue to review yesterday's draft report, we are disappointed with its tone and content, based on an initial review. It appears that the report contains inaccuracies and innuendo, as well as mis-statements of the law. We are particularly disappointed that the report failed to account for much of the information we provided the European parliamentarians and UN Committee Against Torture on this issue.
- As we've said before, we're not in a position to confirm or deny specific intelligence activities.
- As Secretary Rice made clear in discussions with the European Foreign Ministers in December 2005, we believe that renditions are a useful tool in fighting terrorism in certain rare circumstances where an individual would otherwise not be able to be brought to justice or would otherwise be able to escape and avoid capture.
- The draft Temporary Committee report disregards our previous statement that it would be irresponsible to speak of thousands or even hundreds of rendition flights through Europe. The overwhelming majority of intelligence flights have no connection at all to renditions, but the report implies that such a connection exists.
- As the Secretary of State made clear in statements over the past year, the United States complies with its laws and its treaty obligations, and respects the sovereignty of other countries, in engaging in such activities.

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- The suggestion that intelligence flights are engaged in illegal activity is unfounded and undermines cooperation between the United States and Europe that is essential to foiling deadly plots.
- We do not transfer persons where we believe it is more likely than not that the person would be tortured.

Background:

Yesterday the European Parliament's "Temporary Committee on the alleged use of European countries by the CIA for the transport and illegal detention of prisoners" issued a draft report. The report mentions twelve EU countries (Italy, UK, Germany, Sweden, Austria, Spain, Portugal, Ireland, Greece, Cyprus, Denmark and Poland). In most cases, the report cites these countries on the basis of the sheer number of suspected CIA flights passing through their airports. The report provides virtually no evidence to support a connection between the hundreds of flights cited and the transport of detainees, though it discusses a few specific alleged renditions in detail. The report also names non-EU members Turkey, Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo and Romania, the latter for possibly hosting a secret detention center. The harshest rebuke is reserved for Poland, which the report alleges to have detained prisoners at its Szymany airport and to have failed to cooperate with the Committee's investigation. The report makes several recommendations, including strengthening U.S.-EU dialogue on security matters. More hearings will occur before the report is finalized. It is expected to be adopted in plenary on February 13, 2007.

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